STS 3263W [2229]: Science and Difference
4:30–5:20 p.m., Mondays and Wednesdays, JAB 775B
Polytechnic Institute of New York University
Fall 2011

Instructor
Dr. Christopher Leslie  cleslie@poly.edu
Rogers Hall 213h  (718) 260-3130
Office hours: Monday and Wednesday 2:00–2:50, Thursday 12:30–1:30 pm, or by appointment

Prerequisite
Students must have completed HuSS 1023W (or the equivalent) and one 2000-level Science and Technology Studies elective before taking this course.

Course Description
This course considers the historical development of the science of difference from the eighteenth century to the present. Because today we are fairly flexible in our understanding of race and gender, it can be difficult to imagine how these concepts were once more rigid. It is illuminating to consider how reputable scholars once tied their understanding of an individual’s personality and potential to his or her race and gender. With the growth of scientific disciplines, these reified notions of race and gender began to give way – but not without resistance. We shall seek to understand these historical episodes of cultural anxiety over difference by critically examining the logic of classification used to construct difference in living populations and the scientific methodologies that lurk behind the conclusions. In so doing, we shall be able to better identify the legacy of scientific racism in our current time.

Objectives
This semester you will learn to:
• Trace the historical development of scientific concepts relating to gender and race
• Consider how the practice of science changes in different historical periods
• Analyze essential terms in science and technology studies, such as paradigm shift, determinism, constructivism, and distinguish deduction from induction and observational from empirical
• Distinguish between primary and secondary sources and practice advanced writing techniques

Structure
Most class time is devoted to lectures about course topics and discussion of the reading material. Because this course is designated as writing-intensive, some class time is spent on topics related to writing; in addition, there are writing assignments, both formal and informal, and required revision of your writing based on comments from the instructor.

Readings
The required texts for the course are:
• Paul A. Lombardo, Three Generations, No Imbeciles: Eugenics, the Supreme Court, and Buck v. Bell. Johns Hopkins University Press (2010; 978-0801898242)

In addition, there will be PDFs that you will find on Blackboard. Please let me know in advance of class if you have any trouble locating a required reading assignment.
Grading

I shall calculate your semester grade as follows:

- Quizzes 20%
- Exams 25% (5%, 10%, 15%)
- Papers and portfolio checks 25% (5% each)
- Final portfolio 30%

Individual assignments are graded on a typical A to F scale. Grades in the “D” range (60%–69%) indicate an honest attempt to complete an assignment, even though the result is deficient in some way; the “C” range indicates an average fulfillment of the basic assignment. Grades in the “B” range are done thoroughly and reflect the kind of work we do together in class, and grades in the “A” range represent deep thinking from a student who is taking independent responsibility for his or her own learning.

Requirements

Attendance: On-time attendance for the entire class period is mandatory. Students who miss four or more classes automatically fail the course. For the purposes of attendance, missing fewer than twenty minutes (arriving late, departing early, leaving the room) counts as one-third of an absence. Missing more than twenty minutes counts as an absence. If you must miss a class meeting, doctor’s notes are not necessary, but you should contact a reliable classmate to get notes and an overview of the class.

Decorum: Please pay attention during class and avoid behaviors that distract others. Do not eat or sleep during class. You should not use electronic devices, such as cell phones or laptops, at all. Do not hold side conversations; if someone tries to talk to you during class, tell him or her to speak to you after class. Do not bring visitors without advance permission. Do everything you can do to get the most out of class, and make sure others in the class can do so as well.

Examinations: There are three examinations in this class, two during our regular class period and one final exam during the exam period at a date and time the Registrar sets. The exams are cumulative and closed-book. They consist of short answer and essay questions. Missing an exam results in a zero.

Honesty: Be advised that I take the University policy about academic dishonesty seriously and punish cheating or plagiarism by awarding a grade of “F” for the course and referring cases for further action.

Papers: You will write three papers (1,500 words, or about 5 pages each) for this class. You will conduct peer review of the papers with your classmates; all must be uploaded to Blackboard and scanned by SafeAssign before the deadline. Two of the papers are revised after being graded and submitted with the portfolio. Late papers receive a grade of zero. I shall provide more details about these as the deadlines approach.

Portfolio: Your final portfolio will include revised essays, your quizzes and your improvements to them, a writing log, a resume, and a cover letter. I shall hand back your essays with comments for revision, and that will guide you for the finished version; the grade reflects your effort at improving the paper. The writing checklist is a description of errors you tend to make in writing with “bad” and “corrected” examples. I shall make a presentation about resumes and cover letters toward the end of the semester. There are two graded portfolio checks during the semester before you submit the final version.

Preparation: According to New York State guidelines, a student should spend at least two hours to prepare for each hour in class. Thus, you can expect to spend about six hours per week getting ready for class. Plan accordingly so that you can read thoroughly, write carefully, and comment thoughtfully. It is
not possible to let this class “happen” without your active involvement. Bring the class materials we are discussing with you and be ready to make observations on the course themes every time.

**Quizzes:** There will be unannounced quizzes on the reading assignments and course lessons. You may consult your own handwritten notes, but not books or printouts, for these quizzes. If you miss a quiz due to lateness or absence, you shall receive a zero.

**How to Do Well**

1. **Be on time and stay for the whole class.** At the start of class, you will notice that I provide a preview of what is coming up and also answer questions. If you regularly miss these first minutes, you will start to feel the uncomfortable sensation that you do not know what is going on. Keep in mind that trains, subways and busses usually take much longer than they “should,” so plan accordingly. Being late or taking a bathroom break occasionally is ok; it happens to everyone. If you are always late or leaving the room, then you are doing something wrong.

2. **Ask questions.** Please raise your hand at the beginning of class or during a presentation. It does little good to whisper to the person next to you; instead, feel free to ask me for clarification. Also, use office hours or write an e-mail message for additional information.

3. **Take notes,** even if I am not writing on the board. Taking notes helps you stay focused on the material we are studying. Note taking also serves another purpose: it helps you to get used to writing about the course materials in your own words. Since the evaluation in this course is written, taking notes is valuable practice (and good exercise for your writing muscles!). There is no need to write down everything I say, but make sure you take down interesting ideas and connections to the course themes. Go over your notes after class to fill in the gaps.

4. **Read actively.** Prepare by reading the assignment for the day carefully before class. Mark key phrases and passages that have to do with the ideas in the course. Take notes like you are preparing a laboratory notebook – write down what you think is important, with examples, and prepare questions you want to ask.

5. **Avoid grade jockeying.** Some students sometimes use the grade weights in this syllabus to plan toward which 80% of the course they will make an effort. The theory seems to be that even by neglecting 20% of the assignments, one can still get a B in the course. This is a flawed strategy. Instead, you should aim for a slightly higher grade on each assignment than you would like for the class. If you want a B, make sure you do B+ or A- work on all assignments. In the end, factoring in for misunderstandings and emergencies, you will probably get that B.

6. **Work proactively.** Start an assignment when it is assigned, not when the deadline is looming. It sometimes takes a little bit of time wondering about an assignment before you make progress, and there are often times that you need guidance. If you wait until the last moment to get started, you cannot negotiate these hurdles adequately.

**Bibliography**

In addition to looking at the full-length versions of scholarship we read in part, you may find these books interesting sources for further information.


**Tentative Assignment Schedule**

**Wednesday, September 7**  
Introduction  
Read the Chapter 1 to Dorothy Roberts’ *Fatal Invention*

**Monday, September 12**  
Racial Classification and Culture  
Read Siep Stuurman, “François Bernier and the Invention of Racial Classification”; Martin Bernal, “Hostilities to Egypt in the 18th Century” from *Black Athena*

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**Note: Tuesday, September 13, is the last day for program adjustments. If you drop before this deadline, no notation will appear on your transcript. No one may add the course after this date.**

**Wednesday, September 14**  
Londa Schiebinger, *Nature’s Body*, Introduction and Chapter 1

**Monday, September 19**  
*Nature’s Body*, chs. 2–4

**Wednesday, September 21**  
*Nature’s Body*, chs. 5–end  
Peer review of paper #1

**Monday, September 26**  
C. L. R. James, “The Property” and “The Owners” from *The Black Jacobins*

**Wednesday, September 28**  
Darwin’s Predecessors  
Jean Baptiste Lamarck, “Degradation and Simplification” and “Direct or Spontaneous Generation” from *Zoological Philosophy*; Stephen Jay Gould, “Lamarck and the Birth of Modern Evolutionism” from *The Structure of Evolutionary Theory*  
*Paper #1 due with portfolio*

**Monday, October 3**  
Steven Jay Gould, “American Polygeny and Crainometry before Darwin” from *Mismeasure of Man*

**Wednesday, October 5**  
*Exam 1*

**Wednesday, October 12**  
Charles Darwin and Race  
Charles Darwin, Chapter 8 (Banda Oriental and Patagonia), Chapter 10 (Tierra del Fuego), and Chapter 17 (Galapagos Archipelago) from *Voyage of the Beagle*

**Monday, October 17**  
Darwin, chs. 1–5 of *Origin of Species*
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, October 19</td>
<td>Darwin, Chapter 6 (“On the Affinities and Genealogy of Man”), Chapter 7 (“On the Races of Man”), Chapter 8 (“Principles of Sexual Selection”) from <em>Descent of Man</em></td>
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<td>Monday, October 24</td>
<td><strong>Social Darwinism and Neo-Lamarckianism</strong>&lt;br&gt;Lewis H. Morgan, Part 1 of <em>Ancient Society</em>; Patrick Brantlinger, “Darwin and After” from <em>Dark Vanishings</em>&lt;br&gt;Peer review of paper #2</td>
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<td>Wednesday, October 26</td>
<td>Richard Hofstadter, chs. 2–4 and 9 of <em>Social Darwinism in American Thought</em></td>
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<td>Monday, October 31</td>
<td><strong>Genetics and Eugenics</strong>&lt;br&gt;Paul A. Lombardo, <em>Three Generations, No Imbeciles</em>, Introduction, Prologue, and chs. 1–3</td>
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<td>Wednesday, November 2</td>
<td>Lombardo, chs. 7–10&lt;br&gt;<em>Paper #2 due with portfolio</em></td>
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<td>Monday, November 7</td>
<td>Lombardo, chs. 11–15</td>
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<td>Wednesday, November 9</td>
<td>Lombardo, chs. 16–end</td>
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<td>Monday, November 14</td>
<td><em>Exam 2</em></td>
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<td>Wednesday, November 16</td>
<td><strong>The End(s) of Race</strong>&lt;br&gt;Theodosius Dobzhansky, “Race” from <em>Heredity, Race, and Society</em>; Michelle Brattain, “Race, Racism and Antiracism: UNESCO and the Politics of Presenting Science to the Postwar Public”</td>
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<td>Monday, November 16</td>
<td><em>Note: Wednesday, November 16, is the withdrawal deadline. If you withdraw before this date, you will see a “W” on your transcript. Otherwise, you will see a grade A to F at the end of the course.</em></td>
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<td>Monday, November 21</td>
<td>Melbourne Tapper, “Sickling and the Paradoxes of African-American Citizenship” from <em>In the Blood</em></td>
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<td>Wednesday, November 23</td>
<td><strong>The Human Genome Project</strong>&lt;br&gt;Sheldon Krimsky and Kathleen Sloan, <em>Race and the Genetic Revolution</em>, Part 2&lt;br&gt;Peer review of paper #3</td>
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<td>Monday, November 28</td>
<td>Krimsky and Sloan, Part 3</td>
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<td>Wednesday, November 30</td>
<td>Krimsky and Sloan, Part 4&lt;br&gt;<em>Paper #3 due with portfolio</em></td>
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<td>Monday, December 5</td>
<td>Krimsky and Sloan, Part 5</td>
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<td>Wednesday, December 7</td>
<td>Krimsky and Sloan, Part 6&lt;br&gt;<em>Note: The Registrar will schedule our final exam at a later date, probably between December 14 and December 23. Please do not make travel plans until the exam schedule has been announced.</em></td>
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